

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/AND/C:DWCOX: CMM

APPROVED BY ARA:FJMCNEIL

ARA/AND:MRBARNEBEY

NSC:RPASTOR .

S/S-S:LREDDY (PHONE)

ARA:RGARELLAND

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P 281240Z MAR 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, CO (TURBAY AYALA, JULIO CESAR)

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE TURBAY VISIT TO U.S. AND REQUEST TO
SEE PRESIDENT CARTER

1. COLOMBIA DESK OFFICER COX RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL ON
MARCH 20 FROM A DR. CIRO MONTANEZ, WHO SAID HE IS MEDICAL
DOCTOR PRACTICING IN WASHINGTON D.C. AREA AND THAT HE HAD
BEEN ASKED BY LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JULIO
CESAR TURBAY TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING LOW-KEY INQUIRY IN
WASHINGTON: TURBAY IS SAID TO BE THINKING OF A TRIP TO
THE U.S. PRIOR TO THE JUNE 4 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. HE
WOULD VISIT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, AND POSSIBLY CHICAGO AND
MEET WITH COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS, AND
POSSIBLY WITH U.S. BUSINESS CIRCLES WITH INTERESTS IN
COLOMBIA. HE ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR TURBAY TO
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MEET BRIEFLY WITH PRESIDENT CARTER DURING THE VISIT.

2. COX SAID THAT OF COURSE TURBAY IS WELCOME TO MAKE A
PRIVATE VISIT TO THE U.S., AND THAT THE USG WOULD HELP
OUT AS IT FEASIBLY COULD. COX SAID QUESTION OF A POSSIBLE
MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO BE
REFERRED TO HIGHER AUTHORITIES, AND THAT ONE QUESTION

WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED BEFOREHAND WOULD BE
WHETHER A TURBAY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD BE

CONSIDERED AS U.S. INTERFERENCE IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS
IN COLOMBIA. MONTANEZ DISMISSED SUCH A CONSID-
ERATION BY SAYING THAT TURBAY IS GOING TO WIN BY A
LANDSLIDE IN THE JUNE ELECTION, SO THAT THERE WOULD
(ALLEGEDLY) BE NO PROBLEM IN THAT REGARD.

3. FYI. AS A MATTER OF POLICY THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT
RECEIVE OPPPOSITION LEADERS OR CANDIDATES FOR POLITICAL
OFFICE. FURTHER, THE PRESIDENT'S BUSY SCHEDULE WOULD
NOT PERMIT SUCH A MEETING. IN ADDITION, WE BELIEVE THAT
A PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH TURBAY BEFORE THE ELECTIONS
WOULD INDEED BE INTERPRETED IN COLOMBIA AS INTERFERENCE
IN COLOMBIAN POLITICS, AND WE WOULD NOT RECOMMEND IT.

4. COX INFORMED AMBASSADOR BARCO ABOUT THE CALL FROM
MONTANEZ ON MARCH 21. BARCO SAID MONTANEZ IS A CLOSE
PERSONAL FRIEND OF TURBAY, AND WAS TURBAY'S PERSONAL
PHYSICIAN WHEN THE LATTER SERVED AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: EVEN THOUGH THE WHITE HOUSE WOULD
NOT RECEIVE TURBAY, DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S
COMMENTS ON THIS APPROACH BY MONTANEZ, AND ANY RECOMMEN-
DATIONS EMBASSY MAY HAVE REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF MEETING
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BETWEEN TURBAY AND SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AND NSC
REPRESENTATIVE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE078068
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DWCOX: CMM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780134-0511
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780318/aaaaaota.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 283dfebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3181381
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE TURBAY VISIT TO U.S. AND REQUEST TO SEE PRESIDENT CARTER
TAGS: OVIP, CO, (TURBAY AYALA, JULIO CESAR)
To: BOGOTÁ
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/283dfebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014